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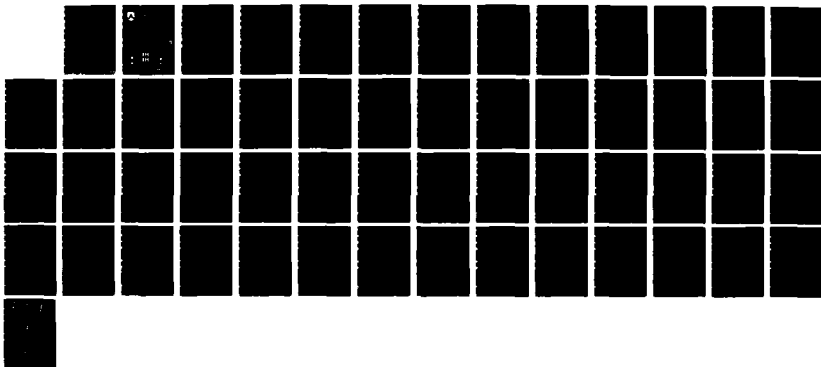
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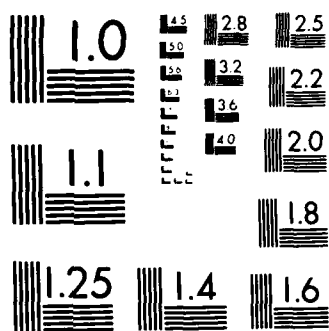
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RESEARCH REPORT

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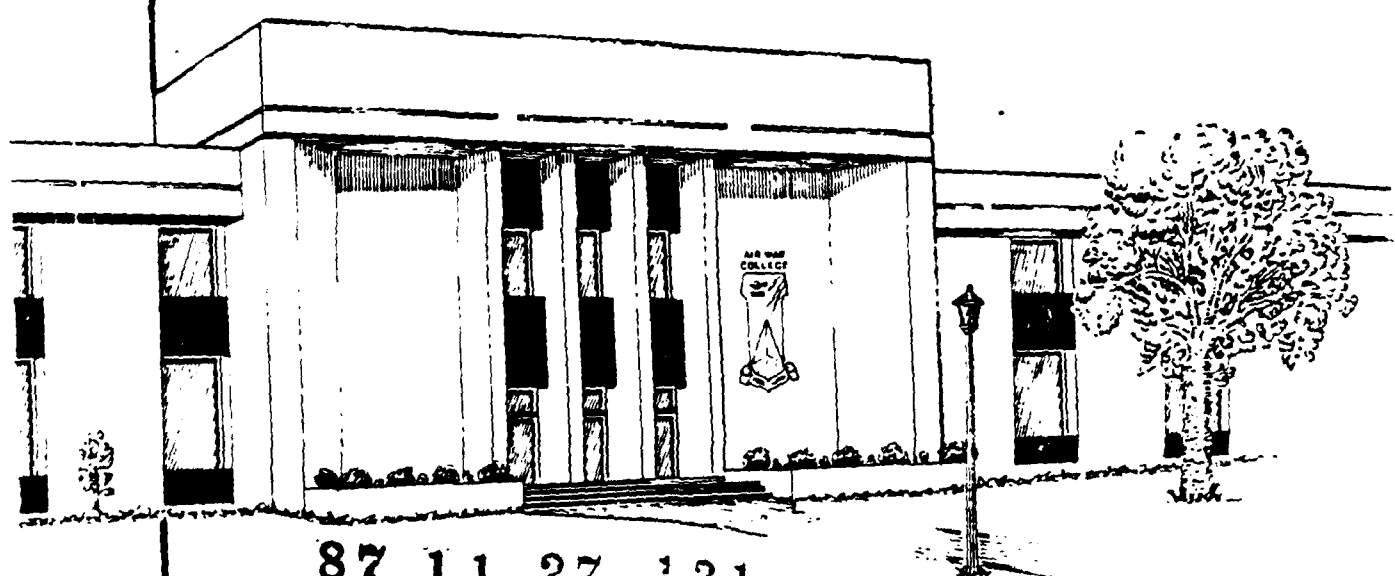
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AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS--CAN IT SUPPORT
AIR FORCE DOCTRINE MORE EFFECTIVELY?

By COLONEL MARVIN J. HARRIS

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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**AIR WAR COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY**

**AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS--CAN IT SUPPORT
AIR FORCE DOCTRINE MORE EFFECTIVELY?**

by

**Marvin J. Harris
Colonel, USAF**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT**

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Bart Michelson

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

April 1987

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Air Force Public Affairs--Can It Support Air Force Doctrine More Effectively?

AUTHOR: Marvin J. Harris, Colonel, USAF

This paper questions whether Air Force doctrine can be supported more effectively by considering external and internal factors such as society, the media, the nature of government and Air Force public affairs, legal constraints, public relations theory, the message, and manpower/training. The author criticizes the Air Force for not using public relations theory enough in its programs. The conclusion is that some internal factors in the Force can be given more emphasis to fine tune the ability to support Air Force doctrine more effectively.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Marvin J. Harris (M.B.A., Eastern New Mexico University; M.A., American University) graduated from Principia College, Elsau, Illinois, in June 1966 and completed Officer Training School that October. His career includes jobs as an aircraft maintenance officer at Shaw AFB, South Carolina; Executive Officer to the Fifth Air Force commander in Japan and to the Director of Personnel Plans in the Pentagon; and Chief of Public Affairs at Cannon AFB, New Mexico, Kunsan AB, Korea, and Lackland AFB, Texas. He was also Chief of the Speakers Branch in the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs. Before Air War College he was Director of Public Affairs for Air Training Command at Randolph AFB, Texas. One of Colonel Harris' masters degrees is in Public Relations. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Texas Public Relations Association and is an accredited member by national examination of the Public Relations Society of America.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Current Air Force Doctrine mentions the need for support of the people in order to have commitment of forces. Therefore, Air Force Public Affairs, the organization tasked with communicating Air Force subjects to external and internal audiences, plays a key role in seeking that public support.

Current Air Force Doctrine's premise of the need for public support is a lesson learned in past conflicts and is a key to the Air Force's role in helping the United States keep the world secure. But can Air Force Public Affairs support the doctrine more effectively than is being done now? Can it be supported better despite external and internal challenges to Air Force public affairs activities from such areas as society, the media, use of public relations theory, and manpower and legal constraints?

During my over 10 years in Air Force Public Affairs, the Air Force public affairs community has appeared to struggle with how it can be more effective--for both the managers and the audiences it serves. This struggle for effectiveness and acceptance by military public relations organizations is historical, and is one shared by public relations counterparts in the corporate world. Reasons for the struggle range from the difficulty and expense of measuring the results of a public relations program to a perception by some legislators that public relations is not an acceptable practice for a military organization. This has led to the Air Force public affairs world having

both to produce results and prove its worth to Air Force leaders at the same time.

With these thoughts in mind, I took a look at some factors affecting the Air Force Public Affairs field and tried provide some ideas on how we can do things better in supporting Air Force doctrine.

This paper focuses my own thoughts and raises some questions and ideas for Air Force public affairs professionals. I don't consider my effort to be the panacea for solving all Air Force public affairs issues, nor do I intend it as a criticism of those who lead the Air Force public affairs community today. However, I do hope that my comments encourage serious thought.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS TASK

Today's world presents a multitude of challenges to the leaders of the United States. There are international military and economic struggles, threat of nuclear confrontation, emergence of Third World powers, and many other major issues which threaten world stability.

Due to tremendous technological changes in the past 25 years, the issues and situations can be communicated to the peoples around the globe in seconds. Added to that are the many domestic priorities that face national leaders in directing over 200 million American citizens--economic and social programs, our legal activities, and preserving peace and freedom. All of these concerns take resources--people, time and money to plan, organize, administer and make them work effectively.

Our national defense effort has a high priority for these resources because a strong defense provides the United States with an umbrella under which to operate freely and insure that other countries who want to maintain freedom and a self governing way of life have the opportunity to do so.

One arm of our nation's defense establishment is the United States Air Force. It, like all other U.S. government agencies, competes for limited government resources to operate, maintain and modernize its forces.

In the early 1980's movie about the first American astronauts, "The Right Stuff", one scene showed an actor asking another actor about what makes rockets go up. The answer was "funding." That was true during the 1950's era the movie portrayed and also is true now.

If you accept the premise that funding is what makes aircraft and missiles fly, then the emphasis is to gain support from those who appropriate the dollars is all-important. The question for today is how to do it effectively in light of available resources, competition and institutional constraints.

A. Air Force and Public Affairs Doctrine and Strategy

But the greatest long range argument for properly planned, organized and executed public relations relates to the permanent security of the United States. If the general public (and high authority) gradually come to understand what Air Power is and what it can do, there is every likelihood we will maintain after this war an air establishment adequate for the nation's security....Therefore, a properly planned, organized and executed public relations program within the AAF is of vital importance not only to the AAF during the war, but to future national security as well. (1:1-2)

This excerpt from a 1943 report on Army Air Forces' public relations in overseas areas (signed by Brig Gen Thomas O. White, then head of Intelligence) shows that at least one farsighted senior military leader formally endorsed the importance of public acceptance in order to give understanding and credibility to airpower. That belief in public acceptance to support airpower has not changed today.

The current Air Force Manual 1-1, Basic Aerospace Doctrine, emphasizes how and why we should fight. It "...is a statement of officially sanctioned beliefs and warfighting principles which describe and guide the proper use of aerospace forces in military action." (2:v) But a key point is that none of the doctrine can happen easily without public support. The Doctrine Manual states that emphatically:

...The decision to commit U.S. military forces in the conduct of war must consider the desired objectives, the capabilities of our forces, and the will of the people. The fabric of our society and the character of our national values suggest that the decision to employ US military forces depends on a clear declaration of objectives and the support of the American people. In every sense, US Armed Forces belong to the people, and the ultimate success in committing these armed forces to achieve the objective will rely on the support of the people. To ignore this relationship is to invite defeat. (2:1-1).

In today's environment, citizens of the United States probably are aware that our country needs some kind of defense, but the big questions in light of limited resources are how much defense, what kind, where, and in what form?

We in the United States are in a time of no direct armed conflict, and it is difficult for the American public to focus in on defense matters. While some arguably would say our peaceful status in the world is because we have such a strong national defense and the will to use it when pressed, we must still face the realities of today's world.

We can assume that, on the whole, Air Force doctrine is based on experience of what works and what doesn't work--so there is no doubt that Air Force concern about the need for public has been reinforced by the experience our country faced in Vietnam. During that period the war was debated and complained about until it was clear both to us and the enemy that the will of the people would not support our continuing involvement in that conflict.

B. Defining the Role

To help achieve this public support required by Air Force doctrine is a big challenge. It is tough to define how to go about it and to know when you have achieved it. While the encouraging of public support is a responsibility of all Air Force members, a major responsibility for orchestrating and generating this public support for the Air Force rests with Air Force Public Affairs.

Why should the Air Force so concerned with its public image? After all, wouldn't the United States have an Air Force even without public support? Possibly, but because the Air Force competes with others for resources, then it might not be as strong or as modern as it is today. Public awareness about defense is needed, but the real concern boils down to dollars for support of its programs in Congress. There is a need for recruiting, retention, and acceptances of bases and missions at various locations, but the bottom line is money for weapons and programs.

While the Air Force must compete for resources, current laws prohibit the Air Force from overtly spending money to lobby Congress.

Consequently, it appears that the Air Force seeks those resources indirectly under the umbrella of public support--which hopefully will translate into public support for (or no argument against) Congressional appropriations.

Air Force Doctrine states the importance of public support. The Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) at the Pentagon published a formal doctrine in 1986 and stated in part that "Public Affairs programs afford the Air Force an important means for establishing the credibility of its force." (3:24) The public affairs doctrine is what most Air Force public affairs people had been doing for quite some time, but the published doctrine is significant in that it formally recognizes how the Air Force public affairs operation fits into the Air Force mission spectrum.

Getting from "point A" of telling about the Air Force to "point B" of gaining public support appears relatively simple. But it can be just as complex and difficult as gaining air superiority or achieving interdiction. Gaining public support also takes planning, time, and resources. And, it is subject to many difficulties--similar to "friction" in war described by military writer Baron Carl von Clausewitz, as "...the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult." (4:121)

C. Limitations

There are several reasons why achieving public support through the use of Air Force public affairs activities is difficult. The reasons are both external and internal to the Air Force public affairs organization, and they range from the practical to the theoretical.

Before embarking upon the limitations to our effort and what can be done to overcome the challenges, I believe it is important to understand how public affairs developed in the Air Force. Just like certain types of aircraft, it has had to prove its worth to skeptics--and it has not always been successful.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION

A. The History

One of the few composite works on the history of Air Force Public Affairs I located is a paper submitted by John Landis Hartig for a masters degree at American University in Washington, D.C. It goes through Air Force public affairs from early days until 1955.

Public affairs goes back to the beginnings of the Army Air Corps, but its real importance as an assist to the military effort really begins in World War II.

In the 1930's public relations and military intelligence were intertwined. They were sections within the same division, but "every scrap of information that came from the Public Relations Section had to be released through Intelligence. (5:206)

Hartig maintains that this promoted control of public relations by Intelligence. Because of the increasing world tensions in the 1930's the intelligence function became increasingly important--Hartig says to the point in the Information Division where it "completely overshadowed public relations". (5:206) The Information Division was eventually renamed the Intelligence Division and "public relations was submerged deep within it." (5:206)

In September 1941 General "Hap" Arnold had the Public Relations Section taken out of Intelligence and put into the Headquarters, Army Air Forces. (5:206) General Arnold wanted to increase the scope of the activities, but information for release to the public still had to be

cleared through the War Department Bureau of Public Relations. This agency was created in February 1941 and the policy lasted for another five years (5:206)

In 1943, General Arnold said that all Headquarters public relations activities would go back to Intelligence (5:115) "It again became the Office of Technical Intelligence." (5:116)

When the Army Air Forces became the Air Force in 1947, the Directorate of Public Relations was established under the supervision of the Secretary of the Air Force. (5:161) The new directorate previously had been the Directorate of Information as military staff agency, and when the transfer occurred all the functions and people were transferred at the same time. (5:161) The new director was a civilian, with a military two-star deputy. The deputy, Major General Rosie O'Donnell, had been the boss under the previous arrangement (5:161) The agency was divided into three divisions: Air Information, Civil Liaison, and Legislative Services. (5:162).

"The Legislative and Liaison Division was finally separated from the public relations function, and raised to the status of an independent directorate on August 26, 1948. At the same time, the Civil Liaison Branch was kept within the Directorate of Public Relations and moved up to division status" (5:164)

"The essence of the Air Force public relations function was publicly enunciated by Mr. Stephen F. Leo, its Director, in an address at Kent State University, Ohio, on June 16, 1948:

The Principal basis for the existence of our activities is the requirement for making the fullest information available to the public, within the limits of security, upon which the citizens can form their conclusions concerning defense programs. Those who pay are entitled to know about what they are buying. It is the mission of the public relations elements of each armed service to tell this story fully, clearly, and as soon as the facts are available." (5:164-65)

In 1949 there was an effort to unify the armed services in their public relations efforts. "In order to eliminate the feuding between the three services and to effect greater armed forces unification, Mr. James Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense, created the Office of Public Information for the National Military Establishment." (5:172)

In essence this became the attempt to speak with one voice in the dissemination of information. Shortly thereafter, Forrestal was succeeded by Louis A. Johnson who sought "to crack down and make unification work." (5:173)

As part of this he made Mr. William Frye in charge of the Office of Public Information and pared down service information staffs. "At the time, there was a grand total of 520 people working in the information offices of the three services. Mr. Johnson's edict cut this number to 330 with 285 allotted to the Office of Public Information in the Defense Department. (5:174--taken from "An Information Program for the United States Air Force" John Hohenberg, A report submitted to the Secretary of the Air Force, August 5, 1953, p. 15)

According to Hartig's history, the unification effort and cutting of service staffs was not effective. The services kept trying to raise the

personnel ceilings, stating that they were too low (5:174). As a result, the Director of the Office of Public Information sent the services a memo on July 22, 1949 allowing them to keep people on their staffs pending the decision on ceilings. (5:175--from memo in S.A. Knutson, "History of the Public Relations Program in the United States Army", Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1953, p. 402) In 1950 "the Army and Navy continued to augment their staffs without consulting the Secretary of Defense". (5:175--from page 15 of the Hohenberg report mentioned previously)

On May 10, 1950, "the Directorate was transferred from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force to the Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, by order of Mr. Thomas K. Finletter, the incoming Secretary of the Air Force. No immediate functional changes accompanied this shift." (5:176--as taken from Special Projects Office, "History of the Office, Secretary of the Air Force, 1947 to June 30, 1950." Vol. I, Unpublished, Directorate of Public Relations Section, p. 1.)

This move had a great significance in that the Directorate would now be under a military Chief of Staff. The director changed from being a civilian to Brigadier General Sory Smith, former deputy to the civilian director, Mr. Leo. (5:176)

Hartig indicates that the activities suffered no curtailment while working for the Chief of Staff, and the mission of informing the public was still being done successfully. At that time Air Force public relations consisted of 86 people-34 civilians, two airmen, and fifty

officers. (5:177--as taken from Organization and History, Directorate of Public Relations, Headquarters, United States Air Force, July 1, 1949 to December 31, 1950, p. 5)

However, in 1952, the public relations effort ran into congressional trouble.

In February 1952, the information activity in the armed forces was branded as 'propaganda' activity by Representative F. Edward Hebert, Democrat of Louisiana. This accusation resulted because Congressman Hebert thought that the services had used their public relations resources to try and explain away 'his committee's expose of waste in the military.' (5:185)

Hebert asked for the "name and salary paid each civilian press agent, ghost writer and public relations expert and for whom and under whose directing the individual works." (5:185) The services gave him only 211 names--Hartig presumes this was the number given since Hebert only asked for the names of civilian personnel. Later, however, Hebert got about 500 military and civilian names. (5:186--as taken from George R. Creel, Jr., "Congressional Attitudes Toward Informational Activities in the Federal Government," Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1952, p. 168)

As a result of the inquiries by Representative Hebert, the Air Force reduced its public relations staff by 65 per cent. In ordering the action, Secretary Finletter said, 'The civilian secretary should assume more responsibility for representing the department to the public instead of leaving the job to a large public relations staff.' (5:186--from the Creel thesis)

In order that he might better assume such responsibility, Mr. Finletter transferred the Directorate of Public Relations out of the Office of the Chief of Staff back into his office where it had been two years previously. This was the last change in top command for Air Force Public Relations, and it has remained in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force ever since. (5:186)

"The Air Force further capitulated to Congressional criticism by dropping the title Directorate of Public Relations. The name was changed to the Office of Public Information." (5:187--from Cutlip and Center, Effective Public Relations, 1952, p. 426)

In the late 1970's the Air Force changed the name to the Office of Public Affairs, to be in line with other services and to reflect more accurately the duties of the organization.

B. The Current Structure

The current Public Affairs structure follows the Department of Defense line and staff organizational structure.

At the Pentagon level it works for the Secretary of the Air Force and consists of divisions which are functionally aligned into Media Relations, Community Relations, Internal Information, and Security Review and Plans Division.

At field level the public affairs office is in the staff position. The office normally works for the commander and/or vice commander of the organization it service. Where there is more than one major organization on an installation, the public affairs office belonging to the host unit normally is designated the host base public affairs office.

Within a public affairs office, the line and staff arrangement continues at all levels. The office organization and responsibilities are arranged primarily by function--with most offices having functions in internal information, community relations, and media relations. In larger organizations there may be a plans and resources office and special projects, command presentations, or other functions peculiar to the specific Air Force organization. In smaller organizations, the functions have been combined so that responsibilities overlap between people--depending upon the demand for that particular public affairs responsibility at the time.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHALLENGE

Now that we have considered the task of gaining public support and the organizational structure that has to do it, is the Air Force public affairs community capable of accomplishing the task as outlined in the Air Force doctrine manual?

It is difficult to analyze and evaluate all of Air Force public affairs as an organization, so I have tried to narrow it down to a few factors for consideration in order to improve our support of Air Force doctrine. Some factors the public affairs community is working on already, some are common sense, some we can't do anything about, and some call for added emphasis.

For the analysis, I divided the problems/issues into external and internal areas. External means there are major outside forces which cannot be directly controlled by the Air Force public affairs organization. By internal I mean something that the Air Force public affairs organization can cause to happen within its own structure.

A. EXTERNAL

1. Society

Since Air Force public affairs must deal with public opinion in hopes of gaining public support, a definition of public opinion is important. Cutlip, Center, and Broom in their book Effective Public Relations, describe public opinion:

...public opinion is the aggregate result of individual opinions on public matters. Public matters are

those that affect groups of people, not isolated individuals. A public is a group of people affected by the same affairs. Publics cannot and do not have opinions, because a public is not an entity in itself. Public opinion is the sum of accumulated individual opinions on an issue in public debate and affecting a group of people. (6:162)

We are in peacetime, so the American public does not think of the military as they might in times of conflict. As a consequence, the competition for resources is such that people consider the societal items such as medical care and welfare as high priorities. Money goes for what needs attention, and in times of peace it is hard to visualize the military as needing attention. This appears to be historical in nature, and the nature of our political system with its checks and balances makes this resource struggle part of our American way of life.

Public opinion is very fickle and subject to influences that were practically nonexistent 25 years ago. People are more mobile and tend to belong to many groups that can overlap. People are more willing to express their opinions by writing their elected representatives, calling in to talk shows, and demonstrating for a cause that they believe in.

Cutlip, Center and Broom state that a particular problem in society "...is a lack of adequate lines of communication with institutions that appear unresponsive." (6:114) As such, the fragmented people gather into groups where they feel that they "belong." (6:114)

Because of technology, people are bombarded with thousands of pieces of information and messages each week. We have become a "fast food information" culture. As such, many people are now getting their information in capsule form. The success of such magazines and newspapers as People and USA Today fill that need. Additionally, such innovations as the Cable News Network and the CNN Headline News enable people to get news 24 hours a day, often with stories being repeated numerous times during the day to catch many sets of audiences. This gives the repetition necessary to cement an impression in a person's mind.

The role of television is becoming more and more important in creating impressions. On January 31, 1987, Larry Speakes on his last day as Deputy Press Secretary to the President, said that "Television is fast becoming the only thing to deal with." (7:unknown) He went on to say "The impact of television on our society is pervasive....Too much government policy is determined on how it will play on the evening news." (7:unknown)

He also said that polls have shown the majority of Americans get two-thirds of their news from television. (7:unknown)

2. The Media

We saw a revolution in the media during the time of Watergate in the early 1970's. Investigative journalism became the rage and government was the good target. While the tide of investigative journalism has changed a bit, the defense establishment still is a ripe

target. The Defense Department is large and bureaucratic, with many opportunities for a reporter to find one item to emphasize.

The subject of defense is complex, and many times the story is being covered at the local level by someone who has little or no defense knowledge or experience. We have not had compulsory military service since the early 1970's, meaning that young reporters' direct acquaintances with military service are virtually nonexistent.

Reason might dictate that one doesn't have to actually participate in an activity to report the facts of it. However, a firsthand participatory knowledge certainly adds to the perspective one can put into a story. It is that perspective that sometimes lacks in the defense reporting we often see.

Another phenomenon which occurs is the herd instinct of journalists. "Reporters," former Senator Joseph McCarthy once remarked, "are like blackbirds on a telephone wire. One flies off, they all fly off. One flies back, they all fly back." (8:73)

Another fact of life, at least in Washington, is the use of leaks. Harvard University Professor Martin Linsky's new book Impact: How the Press Affects General Policymaking said that of nearly 500 top Washington officials from administrations from Johnson to Reagan, 42% said they have leaked information to reporters. (9:unknown)

While Linsky's survey says that the frequency of leaks has not changed in the 20 year period surveyed (1963-83), 74% of the surveyed officials said they were concerned about how the leaks would affect their agencies. (9:unknown)

The Associated Press article about this book goes on to say that three out of four of the respondents said their concerns caused them to limit the numbers involved in policy making and a reduction in things written down. (9:unknown)

The reasons given for leaking include: countering false information, to gain attention for a policy, to develop good relationships with reporters, and to send a message to another branch of government. (9:unknown)

The implications for those practicing public affairs at the Washington level is that the ship of state is not always tight when it comes to policies being planning

3. Nature of Government and Air Force Public Affairs

Conducting public affairs in the Department of Defense has some strong advantages and disadvantages. First, the advantages. The Department of Defense has some clearly defined roles and layers of management. There is a known standard of personnel quality due to the screening process before hiring people (no known felons, hard drug users, etc.). There is relatively standardized training and there is a policy of openness with the media and the public. The Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts provide legal means both for providing and withholding information in certain situations.

Conversely, being in a highly structured environment governed by bureaucratic political realities, legal restrictions on public affairs activities and budget ceilings constrains initiative and reaction time. Also, the number of people working public affairs items is driven by

budgetary and legal constraints rather than workload. For example, there is no Air Force-wide manpower standard for manning a public affairs office. Additionally, the Air Force has experienced a decline in the number of experienced officers that are available to tackle the tough problems.

A disturbing trend is that assigned versus authorized field grade manning for Air Force public affairs officers has gone from 75% in 1982 to 61% in 1986. In 1986 the 79XX (public affairs career field) manning for Majors only numbered 85 people against a requirement of 170. The Captains are 114% assigned versus authorizations. This means the experience levels are low, since the field grade authorizations are usually the bosses. About 61% of Majors billets are filled with Captains. (10)

Another key point is that there are also many government agencies competing for the public's attention, including sister services. In the case of the Department of Defense, information on such items as weapons and the threat often is given to the public in varied and sometimes complex ways by the different services.

Air Force public affairs people, like their civilian counterparts, often echo the fact that management doesn't appreciate or understand their efforts. This is understandable because in a world of numbers such as found in the Department of Defense, the public affairs program does not produce a constant flow of products which throw numbers in front of leaders who look at numbers all day. Instead the leaders may see a product without appreciating the thought, work, and impact that

went into it. Also, each leader might have his or her own agenda that should be promoted--whether it be personal self-aggrandizement or a command/mission specific idea. This is also understandable because, while the the Air Force has centralized control, the operation is very decentralized--giving local commanders a great deal of autonomy. Whether or not public affairs is doing well is based on perceptions of the particular leader who is in charge.

The Air Force also shares a great deal with civilian organizations which are institutional--a large mission that is complex and spread out. Many operations that are not tangible or readily meaningful to the average individual, a mission which does not come in front of the general public each day, and a bureaucracy that people can blame if something goes wrong.

4. Legal Constraints

Periodically there have been congressional restrictions placed on public affairs activities in government, mostly from the appropriations angle. The restrictions are aimed at not spending money to influence Congress and legislation.

a. An act of Congress, passed in 1913, forbids spending for 'publicity experts' any part of an appropriation unless that money is specifically appropriated by Congress. (See 38, U.S.C. 3107)

b. The 'gag law' of July 11, 1919, prohibits using any part of an appropriation for services, messages, or publications designed to influence any member of

Congress in his or her attitude toward legislation or appropriations. (See 18, U.S.C. 1913)

c. ...Restrictions on the privilege of executive departments and independent establishments in the use of the free-mail frank prohibit any executive department from mailing material without a request. (See Title 39, U.S.C.A. Sec 321n.)

d. No part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act, or of the funds available for expenditure by a corporation or agency, shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress. (Pub. Law 92-351, Sec. 608 [a], Enacted July 13, 1972.)

e. No part of any appropriation contained in this or any other Act, or of the funds available for expenditure by any corporation or agency shall be used, other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships, for publicity or propaganda purposes, for the preparation distribution, or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television, or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress, except for the presentation to Congress itself. (Pub. Law 93-50, Sec. 305, enacted July 1, 1973.) (6:574-5)

B. INTERNAL

1. Use of Public Relations Theory

In modern public relations theory, we often see a four-step method for conducting a public affairs program--research, planning, action, and evaluation. If you scratch the surface of most good public

relations programs, you find these steps in some form. The names might be different, but the steps are similar.

1. Defining the problem. This involves probing and monitoring knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of those concerned and affected by the acts and policies of an organization--research and fact finding. In essence, this is an organization's intelligence function as it requires determining 'What's happening now?'

2. Planning and programming. This involves bringing the intelligence to bear on the policies and programs of the organization. It results in decisions affecting program publics, objectives, procedures, and strategies in the interests of all concerned. This step in the process answers 'What should we do and why?'

3. Taking action and communicating. This involves implementing the plans and program through both action and communication designed to achieve specific objectives related to the program goal. With respect to each of the publics, the question is 'How do we do it and say it?'

4. Evaluating the program. This involves determining the results of the program, as well as assessing the effectiveness of program preparation and implementation. Adjustments can be made in the continuing program or the program can be stopped after learning 'How did we do?' (6:200)

There are several obstacles which limit the effort to follow pure public relations theory in our day-to-day operations--mainly emphasis, manpower, time, money and Congressional constraints. Until the past two years, the Security Review and Plans Division of the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs in the Pentagon was

anything but that. The office was used primarily as a catch-all for projects, and little planning of relevance to the total public affairs force was done. A leadership change has made that operation more proactive.

Still, the Air Force public affairs community is not very effective in generating case to Air Force leadership for the consistent use of public relations theory or practices to synergize the Air Force effort in gaining public support for Air Force programs. The reason is that we cannot always show what not having a clear objective will do in terms of time and resource expense. There are leaders who do realize the value of good public affairs, but it is generally based more on perception than receipt of tangible results.

With as many technically educated people as there are in Air Force public affairs, one would assume that the four-step method is used to some degree. However there is room for improvement. For example, there is no current synergistic integration effort between the divisions in OSAF/PA in terms of insuring messages are passed when answers are given to the media, speakers are booked, or Air Force dignitaries travel.

A review of several issues of Channels, a newsletter with news and ideas about communication tells of programs which help the nonprofit sector of the public relations community. Continually, the first step mentioned in putting public relations programs together is research which lead to stating a clear objective before starting the program.

The January 1987 issue of Channels talks about ways to get the jump on handling public issues. While the newsletter is aimed at nonprofit fund raising type of organizations, the message is clear when the article's first tip is "Define the issues. Be specific." (11:5)

As an example of integration of effort that we can fix ourselves is the monthly Public Correspondence Report that goes from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs to the Secretary of Defense. It gives a summary of the amounts and types of correspondence that comes into the DoD Correspondence Directorate. It shows what the people who write are thinking about. While you must consider that some letters are written by organized groups, this report is one indicator of public opinion. The various Service public affairs offices have not been addressees for copies of this report. (12)

It is tough to quantify how well the Air Force does in its efforts. One could conclude that the amount of people coming to the Air Force would be an indicator, as well as how many stories would be written. However, this does not show the effect of the effort.

If you parallel the efforts of the Air Force with that of the insurance industry, you could see that people know they should have insurance, but it is hard to get them excited about it until they are interested or need it. The key is you want to have a public awareness which is neutral at best and positive at best. The big challenge is how to do that and how to realize that you have used your public relations resources to achieve your objective effectively.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is in a resource competitive position, but they are challenged by the images left by the January 1986 Challenger shuttle disaster. They need to project an image of organizational stability and unity or they lack the credibility that will make them trusted by the American public. While the average American may not have much direct impact on the total space program, there is need for the feeling that their money is being spent wisely.

2. The Message

A January 1987 discussion with Colonel Doran Hopkins, Chief of the Security Review and Plans Division at SAF/PA indicated that Directors of Public Affairs throughout the Air Force believe that the Air Force message is too complex for the American public. (13)

At the Worldwide Public Affairs Workshop held at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, in December 1986, the directors of public affairs from major air commands/special operating agencies/and key staffs throughout the Air Force thought the Air Air force could simplify its approach to the public just as the US Navy has done. (13)

The Navy has coined the term "600 ship Navy" in most of their discussions with the public and on Capitol Hill. According to Colonel Hopkins, whatever happens to the Navy or problems that arise, they focus back on their message of a "600 ship Navy". This serves to repeat their message time and time again, but the important point is that the message is simple--even a layman can understand what the Navy wants.

The Air Force has important priorities, but they are difficult to translate into something the average American can understand and react to. While the central Air Force priority remains people (14:53), it's priorities fall into five areas: "modernizing strategic offensive and defensive forces, improving the readiness and sustainability of general-purpose forces, increasing airlift capability, modernizing and expanding tactical forces, and assuring access to space." (15:44)

Robert Topor in Institutional Image: How to Define, Improve, Market It, in the Channels newsletter says that "To build your organizations's reputation/image, the first objective is to create & communicate a positive, common message appropriate to all audiences--an umbrella theme." (16:2)

He also says, "To achieve an institutional image objective requires a) carefully planned, b) research-based, c) deliberate, d) repeated efforts." (16:2)

There was an attempt to focus in on specific messages in 1979-1980 when there was a weekly meeting of the Chief of Staff's Group and the Speakers Branch. This was an active attempt at coordinating what was said on the road by Air Force leaders. The Staff Group from the Secretary's office chose not to participate in the planning session because they believed it was not needed, so the result was that the total initiative lacked one of its key Air Force leaders. Additionally, the working group did not cover those in the Air Staff or Secretariat who spoke to the public on current issues. In theory the initiative was sound, but in practice it was rudimentary and mostly ineffective.

Additionally, there was no way to measure the impact of the speech. In recent months, a similar group meeting has been reinstituted.

Integration of effort is tough, but not impossible. Our key military and civilian leaders, particularly in the field, presently act autonomously in some public affairs efforts, and we ought to make them more effective. One way to do this is to be more timely with policy information. Right now, the timeliest piece of policy is the Department of Defense news briefings and the verbatim transcripts which result from them and are sent to the field. Time and time again, speechwriters are asked for the latest information on some subject, and they have to call friends or have discussions over the phone with higher headquarters. We ought to do better than that.

3. Manpower/Training

In my estimation we will continue to face a shortage of the best in our public affairs officer corps. Because we do not bring in people readily at the middle ranks, we must work with those people we have on board. Public Affairs field grade shortages (except for colonels) are bad, and the future looks acceptable only if the Air Force can retain the captains that will eventually be field graders. According to Major Harold Smarkola, Chief of PALACE PUBLIC AFFAIRS at the Air Force Military Personnel Center, current manning figures show we have slightly above 100 percent of the Captain authorizations manned with the appropriate rank for the summer of 1987. If any of those get out, we will fall below our authorizations. (17)

CHAPTER V

STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

I call this my "If you are so smart, why aren't you rich" section, because I am drawing on personal experience and looking into a crystal ball to forecast the future.

I've approached the problem/issue areas that I mentioned earlier in the paper and attempted to come up with ideas to challenge their negative aspects.

A. EXTERNAL

1. Society. American society as a whole currently seems concerned about defense from the standpoint of resources being spent on it. This is a historical problem in peacetime, so the defense establishment must remain credible and keep punching away towards promoting public understanding with a simple message that the defense establishment is made up of high quality people who are using taxpayers resources wisely.

A July 1986 Gallup Poll showed the military as being the institution which has the highest confidence with the American public. (18) According to the results, 63% said they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the military. (18) The military beat out institutions such as churches/organized religion and the U.S. Supreme Court. Perhaps this means that people are not anti-military as much as anti-bureaucracy. We should build on this confidence by presenting the Air Force as a high quality force whose performance merits confidence.

We should be encouraged that our quality efforts have resulted in a steady increase in confidence from this poll. The military's confidence rating has risen steadily from 54% in 1979 to the present 63%. (18)

We should step up our efforts to identify those people who are influential in helping their elected representatives with national matters and key in on them with our simple message. There will always be the letter writers and fringe who communicate with elected leaders. We should try to influence them in general, but in most cases, they are not players in the grand strategy of resource allocation.

We must continue to insure that quality people go out and represent the Air Force to outside audiences, particularly those who are nonchoir in nature. Our news releases should reflect the quality of the people and the fact that they are part of a community just as civilians are.

2. The Media. Dealing with the media can be tough, but the problem is not unsolvable. The issues are credibility and education. The conflict between the media and the government is historical in nature, but the real concern is that defense reporting will get worse due to the lack of direct familiarity the media has with defense issues. This calls for a new aggressiveness on the part of Air Force public affairs people. The "buzzword" term for this is confrontational journalism, a concept advanced by Mr. Herb Schmertz, head of Public Relations for Mobil Oil. In essence, confrontational journalism means not being afraid to take on a journalist and challenge him/her on facts,

interpretations, etc. What is being done is making the journalist accountable for their reporting, and this concept is favorably recognized by SAF/PA. (19)

However, in addition to this confrontational style the Air Force must be willing emphasize ideas with a simple, central message to give to the reporters. Going along with this, Air Force Public Affairs people must be aggressive with our Air Force leaders in stating over and over that good public relations will not sell a bad product. Our own house must be clean in order to have credibility with the national media. We can sell the quality image only if we have quality to sell.

In addition to this SAF/PA must continue its efforts to familiarize Air Force people with the media and how it works. Richard Halloran, the respected military correspondent in Washington for the New York Times, concludes after participation in numerous military and the media sessions at various war colleges that "Military people really don't know much about the press and television." (20:10)

3. Nature of Government and Air Force Public Affairs. It will be very difficult to change the checks and balances nature of our democratic form of government, so our best strategy is continuing to provide professional service and accurate information. This cannot help but indicate the quality of the Air Force public affairs effort.

As an example of how this is recognized and reflects on the organization, Marlin Fitzwater, President Reagan's new spokesman, is apparently winning many admirers with his professional approach. In a 13 March 1987 story in The Christian Science Monitor, Mr. Fitzwater

is commented upon favorably by such Washington media veterans as Helen Thomas from United Press International and Bill Plante from CBS. "Ellen Hume of the Wall Street Journal says, "...He's known for being fair, and he handles himself professionally." (21:1)

4. Legal Constraints. The Air Force should not attempt to do anything directly about these because of Congressional scrutiny, other than to try and raise the monetary ceiling for payment of specialists dealing directly with the public. This whole legal area is subject to interpretation, and any aggressiveness on soliciting public support chances Congressional criticism.

B. INTERNAL.

1. Use of Public Relations Theory. This is the area where Air Force public affairs can do the most good in supporting Air Force doctrine. Earlier I mentioned the four-step method of research, planning, action and evaluation. It is difficult to have a good, effective public affairs program if the first and last steps are not done--a problem that the Air Force has with many of its programs.

One particular area that needs strengthening is the area of basic research--the foundational first step in the four-step method of conducting a public affairs program. SAF/PA needs to update the collection of synopses of Air Force public affairs studies which evidently has not been done since 1979 when several Air Command and Staff Students did such a project. (22)

Another item needed is an updated composite history of Air Force Public Affairs. The one I found only goes through 1955, and I

doubt that many people have read it. Also needed are oral histories with some of our Air Force public affairs leaders--especially former Air Force Directors of Public Affairs. Students who attend professional military education schools in residence should be assigned these topics until these research-oriented topics are brought up to date. Otherwise, the career field might continue making mistakes or working on ideas that have been done by others already.

One method for evaluation we have not used fully and is readily available to us is formal feedback from our civic leader tours, speeches to civic leader groups and contacts with the media outside of the Washington, D.C. area. We do collect feedback from some civic leader tours, but SAF/PA should initiate a follow-up letter or card system for those mentioned above to see if they received good service during their contacts with public affairs people and Air Force leaders. We need to ask them what we could do better to help them learn more about the Air Force.

There is an office of research needed in Air Force Public Affairs at the Pentagon. It should be a central function that has the time and resources to identify, research, and analyze the issues and give feedback on the results of internal and external public affairs efforts. I envision this office as a clearing house for data and a place where Secretariat and Air Staff aides and special assistants can come to before their bosses make speeches, travel, etc. It could be a repository for statistics, surveys, public opinion poll results, etc., if that does not duplicate any functions already available.

Additionally, the research office can compile feedback data from such items as whether or not base newspapers carried certain articles, media coverage during senior leader visits, etc.--all of this in an effort to see what is right and wrong in our public affairs efforts. The office should produce a product which will be available to Air Force public affairs people in the Pentagon so they can see how their programs are doing. This feedback would help to address the evaluation part of the four-step public affairs method--something which is lacking now.

The idea of a central repository for data is not a new one. I have heard this idea discussed among Air Force public affairs professionals before, and Lieutenant Colonel Carl H. Foster in his 1985 Air War College paper titled "Assessing Public Opinion Toward the Military" said

The evidence seems overwhelming that, at a minimum, a central office for research and coordination should be established. Such an office might not have operational control over the activities and those who engage in presenting the Air Force story to the public, but the office would direct surveys, research, analysis of effort, and report findings and trends to public officials. Such an office would act as a clearinghouse for developing, coordinating, and disseminating educational activities and concepts of operations to military organizations world-wide for use at the local level.
(21:44-45)

SAF/PA is now considering a reorganization as part of a 15% reduction in manpower they are facing. One of the items that is being considered is the creation of an office of policy/analysis to act as a focal point for assessing trends and developing approaches to current

issues. Perhaps that will come to fruition and fulfill a needed research and evaluation capability.

2. The Message. The Air Force and public affairs community needs to settle on a central message theme and stay with it in all dealing with the press and the American public. We do that to some degree in our recruiting message when we show busy, fresh looking, and skilled people doing vital jobs.

We should lead with the Air Force's strength--it has good people doing quality work in the defense of our nation. They need the tools to work with to do the job effectively. To me, it's as simple as that. The issue is clouded, however, by the fact that experts disagree on what we should have, how much, and how much it should cost. While this is going on, our aim should be to portray that we are concerned stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

We should not allow our leaders to think that by they cause change just by putting out information. "Information by itself does not always produce persuasive change." (24:107)

We must be alert for appropriate and timely channels to put out the Air Force message. Air Force Public Affairs has used satellites successfully to pass Air Force stories to television stations nationwide. The method is cheap--about \$600 for 30 minutes of satellite time--and effective. Additionally, SAF/PA is beginning to use computers in their offices, and these have potential for access by newsmen so they can get the latest information and policies quickly.

One other area I suggest is to place appropriate Air Force information with the hometown news release pictures sent to parents/spouses of trainees at Lackland AFB, Texas. The Lackland public affairs office sends these pictures and a letter from the Center Commander to parents/spouses on a daily basis--approximately 50,000-70,000 pictures/letters per year. For a small cost, additional information about the Air Force and defense issues could be sent to a group of people who are all across the United States--many in places where there is no other Air Force/defense presence other than a recruiter.

3. Manpower/Training. This is a challenging area--one that requires creative thinking and initiative. With the small pool of experienced field-grade officers, the career field must rely heavily on the younger officers to help portray the quality Air Force image to the public. This necessitates that our efforts in training them be the best possible.

The formal training given to public affairs officers seems to be the adequate, but SAF/PA needs to develop a tracking system to insure that within the MAJCOMS, the young officers are doing things like getting advanced degrees, getting association with civilian public relations professionals, and working on professional military education. We have a public affairs person assigned to the Air Force Military Personnel Center to manage the career field, and he should supply information to SAF/PA leaders so they can insure that the young officers are being trained and guided correctly.

For our noncommissioned officers (NCOs), we should emphasize their importance by such things as a letter from the SAF/PA Director when they make NCO status, and insuring they have jobs commensurate with their abilities. This may be difficult under current restrictions on assignments which say that a person can only move for a reason such as return from overseas, end of a school, etc.

Air Force Public Affairs needs a manpower study to establish a manpower standard. Currently, there is no real numbers rationale for manning a public affairs office, and this often results in busy offices having the same number of people as those offices in less busy areas. According to Colonel Doran Hopkins at SAF/PAS, in August 1987 the Management Engineering Team detachment at Peterson AFB, Colorado, will begin a two-year, Air Force-wide functional review of the Public Affairs field. If successful, the study should assist in insuring that public affairs manpower resources are used effectively.

Another area which needs examining is allowing our best public affairs officers out of the career field to get broadening assignments and then they don't come back into the field.

We also should develop a better management program for our reserve personnel. Currently, there is no centralized assignment system for our officers. If they get promoted to a rank above the authorized position they are filling, they must go out and find their own public affairs slot to match their new rank. We should not treat our people that way, and that method may not put the person in the place which would be the most effective one for him/her.

There are those who would advocate a change in organizational structure to be more like civilian public affairs agencies. Some civilian agencies are organized into accounts, with a team having responsibility for all aspects of a particular client's public relations efforts. This gives an integrated approach to projecting the client's image by having all efforts play against each other in a synergistic effort. There is considerable merit in organizing this way. For one, you have control over what is going on in all phases of the effort. If you see an opportunity happening in media relations that has possibilities for a community relations spinoff--you have the opportunity to decide on an action in a timely manner. The strength of this type of organization is integration of effort in a timely manner.

Whether the account approach to organization is applicable to the Air Force is debatable. There is no doubt that integration assists the decision making process in promoting a particular issue or product, but the question of reorganizing must take into account the larger Department of Defense picture.

Because the functional public affairs agencies both above and below the Air Force secretariat level are in the line and staff functional mode, it would cause considerable confusion for those trying to find out what account is in what location. There are ways to solve this, such as a customer service clearing house or timely publication of master lists, but why not search for better integration among your current structure before attempting to reorganize. The current structure is sound and compatible. If the internal public

affairs agencies do not communicate, an attempt to solve that administratively should be attempted before altering the organizational structure.

Additionally, we need more people trained in the area of space operations. Currently, few of our public affairs people understand this complex area. This is understandable, since a majority of our Air Force effort is in other mission areas. However, space is the wave of the future in the Air Force, and it is incumbent on public affairs leadership to prepare our young officers and NCOs in space knowledge.

To see how important the training is for all of our people, especially the young ones, I refer back to the recognition given to Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater for his professionalism. That's what we want to strive for in Air Force public affairs work. To do that our people have to be well trained.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to examine some of the challenges faced by the Air Force Public Affairs career field in promoting the public support so vital to the success of Air Force doctrine.

The Air Force is only one part of the defense picture and therefore shares in the successes and failures of the defense establishment. However, one would conclude that quality recruiting and the high confidence level in the military shows that we must be doing something right in the portrayal of the Air Force image.

The tough part comes in the procurement of weapons and support systems. Part of that is caused by politics, and the Air Force is prohibited by law from using public relations activities to influence Congressional decisions.

Our best strategy then, is to present a simple message that the Air Force has quality people doing a dedicated job in the defense of the country. Air Force people need the best and most modern equipment to do that effectively.

We will always be in competition for limited financial resources. That is the nature of our Nation's political system. We must continue to show to the public that we are doing a good job with defense dollars and that they are getting a return on their money. We can do this by better research and evaluation on the information they need to know and how we can present it most effectively. Our public affairs people

must be highly trained and clearly understand the task of supporting the Air Force doctrine.

The question I asked is if Air Force Public Affairs can support the Air Force doctrine more effectively. Until we have a better research and evaluation capability to understand where the strong and weak points of our efforts are, the answer will have to be no. When public affairs professionals teach and use a four-step method in their programs, but the Air Force doesn't use the first step and the last step to a strong degree, I say we have a glaring weakness in knowing what we need to do to gain public support for the Air Force. Additionally, lack of a simple, consistent message is a hindrance to public understanding.

The Air Force will be the strongest when public opinion towards it is the strongest--and it is our job as public affairs people to make that happen. We have a tremendous challenge ahead of us.

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19. Information taken from discussions with Brig Michael P. McRaney, Director of Public Affairs, OSAF; Colonel Doran Hopkins, Chief, Security Review and Plans, OSAF; plus listening to the tape of a portion of a seminar with Mr. Herb Schmertz and key Air Force public affairs officers. Mr. Schmertz also has a book covering this subject (with William Novak), Good-bye to the Low Profile: The Art of Creative Confrontation, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1986.

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(Note: This paper has been read by Colonel Doran Hopkins, SAF/PAS. He suggested several minor factual and editorial changes).

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